

Sunday School

THE LAME MAN HEALED.

Acts 3:1-16.

January 24, 1909.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know."—Acts 3:16.

SHORTER CATECHISM.

Q. 39. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is obedience to His revealed will.

DAILY HOME READINGS.

M.—Acts 3:1-11.
T.—Acts 3:12-26.
W.—Luke 5:17-26.
Th.—Matt. 10:1-15.
F.—Isa. 35.
S.—1 John 1.

S.—John 3:9-21.

TOPICAL OUTLINE.

A Specimen Apostolic Miracle—

The lame beggar, vs. 1-5.

Healed and praising God, vs. 6-10.

The subject of Peter's second sermon, vs. 11-26.

LESSON COMMENTS.

The exact time of this occurrence is unknown. It was doubtless some time during the first two years after Pentecost.

At three o'clock in the afternoon, the hour of the evening sacrifice, Peter and John went up into the temple to pray. Behold, at the Beautiful Gate of the temple a lame beggar lay. He must have been seen there many times before. Jesus Christ may have passed him and the apostles may have seen him many times. The set time for his healing had not yet come, but at the ninth hour of a certain day the clock struck the time for his redemption. Why not before? Why not later on? Why at this time? The answer to each question is, **God reigns** and this was God's time. It was best for the beggar, best for Peter and John, best for the church and the world, best for God's glory that the lame man should have suffered forty years and not have been healed until this day. Let all questions about times and seasons be answered by the word, "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth!"

Expecting alms the beggar reached out his hands to Peter and John, and then followed the command **Rise up and Walk**. What was naturally impossible took place at once. The man arose and went into the temple, walking and leaping and praising God. This was a wonderful occurrence. From birth the man had been lame, a **poor cripple**. He not only received strength to walk but knowledge and skill to walk.

Of all the wonderful miracles that were performed during those early days in Jerusalem, why is this the only one recorded. For it is a fact that many signs and wonders were done in the name of Christ at Jerusalem during these early days, but leaving out the case of Ananias and Sapphira and Peter's rescue, both of which occurred later on, the miracle of healing the lame beggar is the only one that Luke has ever seen fit to record.

The reasons for it are satisfactory. First, this miracle was more conspicuous than others, because it was the occasion of the arrest of Peter and John, and, second, it was the beginning of that long persecution which burst upon the church and scattered its members far and wide. It was the first occasion, too, for the appearance of Peter and John before the rulers of the people. Then, too, the lame man is a type or at least a picture of the peoples to whom the gospel should be sent, and his healing is an illustration of the manner in which sinners are converted, and a type of the methods to be used in the evangelization of the world.

One great feature of the gospel is that it is to be preached to the poor. See Luke 4:18, and 1 Cor. 1:26-29. In these passages we find that God hath chosen the foolish things of

the world to confound the wise. So the poor cripple! He illustrates the condition of lost sinners—He lies at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, the most beautiful place in the world, perhaps, a wonderful gate forty-five feet high, made of Corinthian brass, was behind him and before him a panorama of mountains. The glory and grandeur of nature and art were around him, but he was a cripple and a beggar. Naaman was a king's general, but he was a leper. Poor sinners today are surrounded with glory and splendor, nature all around, above, beneath, beautiful, splendid. But the poor sinner is a cripple, sick unto death. Despite the environment of beauty and glory, even kings and princes are like this poor cripple. King Solomon had tasted of every cup of pleasure, but he too, was a cripple and a beggar. All is vanity and vexation of spirit. No greater contrast could be found anywhere, between the pride and pomp of the world and reigning weakness and want, than is to be found in the case of this lame beggar. Down through the ages it has been the work of the gospel to bring a comfort and joy to the poor and needy. Out of the ranks of the poorest and lowest it is God's plan to fill the higher places of the earth.

In this case of healing, we see again the pictures of a God meeting a helpless sinner. First, a picture of the age-long struggle of faith. Jesus said to the paralytic, "Take up thy bed and go to thine home." Peter said to the cripple "Rise and walk." In both cases the thing commanded was the very thing that could not be done. But in both cases the power to do came with the word and both men walked. Dry bones hear the command **Live**. They cannot live. But they do live by the power of God. The voice that commands brings life, and because the healing of the beggar illustrates it, therefore, Luke records it.

We see in the miracle again a type of the methods to be used in church work. All through missionary fields today the gospel of good health is proclaimed and the medical missionary goes forth to heal the bodies of men. It is simply a world-wide expansion of Peter's work with the lame man. No other religion does this for the bodies of men. The scriptures teach that the body of a man is redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ as well as his soul, and this poor beggar's body bought with blood was precious in the eyes of Jesus.

The miracle is also a type of individual work. Peter said: "Such as I have give I thee." This is true under all conditions. At the battle of the Granicus, Alexander imported his courage to the Greeks and Darius, his timidity to the Persians. Each one could say "Such as I have give I thee." A man in our church whom we all know has a cherry smile for every one he meets. A stranger with his face shadowed and blue, can't help smiling when he meets our man. "Such as I have give I thee." So in every home, in every community, in every church, men and women import what they possess by nature or have received by grace, and these gifts of nature and grace are oftentimes too costly to be bought by gold. The poor cotter upon the mountain, who has no silver nor gold enwraps his child with a love that is priceless. The poor sick woman lying upon her bed without gold or silver or comfort inspires nurses and visitors and physicians with a faith that is born of God. A drunken man, dying of delirium, filled with horrors, imparts those horrors to others. "Such as I have give I thee" is the law of nature and the law of grace. "Covet earnestly the best gifts" that when we give we may give the best.

To the wondering people gathered around, Peter preached this second sermon and again it was "More about Jesus." He gives all the glory of the miracle to Christ. Without reserve he proclaims the great fact that the woman was wrought through faith in Jesus Christ. Peter had faith in Jesus. He spoke to the cripple and took him by the hand and lifted him up, all of which were aids to faith and so the beggar had faith; and through faith in His name on the part of both, the beggar and Peter the wonder was performed he spoke as follows: "Maid, I say unto thee, Arise!" ministers to all our needs. The hand of some agent is always present to encourage us to believe. When Jesus healed he spoke as follows: "Maid, I say unto thee, Arise!" "Lazarus, come forth!" "Waves, go to sleep!" He invoked no authority, for he was the Son of God, and the glory was his. When the apostles healed they hid behind the name of Jesus and gave all the glory to him. Thus it becometh all the saints to do. None of self, but all of thee.

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